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Bardic Beltaine

The White Bard

The BARD should stand to the WEST, unless otherwise specified in the ritual.

Materials:

- One cauldron, filled with water
- a wreath of flowers for the MAIDEN
- the Maiden should wear white, if possible
- two wooden swords (optional)
- a fire, as close to the ground as possible
- A BARD/GREEN MAN (note: if you have no Bard, then a male to act as Green Man should be chosen either by lottery, or by the Maiden. The Maiden is, of course, free to request a specific person to act as Green Man even if there is a Bard available to the coven.)
- candles for all, if possible

The place of ritual should be set up, away from the gathered participants.

It is more than a good idea to manage bathrooms and such like before the circle is closed. This Mystery is not something any of the participants should miss out on!

> HPS:
> Go we now to the sacred place
> And stand within the sacred space
> Turn your minds to sacred things
> And dance with me unto the ring!

HP and HPS lead the coven to the place of ritual by a spiral dance, ending in a circle around the altar. The cauldron should be at the south. The Bard/Green Man dances at the end of the line.

HPS
Come we forth, with the Spiral Dance
Within the Lady's radiance
To celebrate the Year renewed
And praise the Powers, with gratitude.

Earth and Water, Fire and Air
I invoke the Goddess there!
This night we are Between the Worlds
To celebrate the year unfurled!

HP
Earth and Water, Fire and Sky
I invoke the God on high
This night we are Between the Worlds
To celebrate the year unfurled!

The corners shall be called thusly, that all may hear, but shall not be called until the HPS reaches that corner on her circumambulation.

EAST
O Guardians of the Eastern Tower,
Airy ones of healing power
I do summon, stir and call you
See these rites and guard this circle!

Come to us and heed our call!
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
Come to us; and Blessed Be!

SOUTH
Oh fiery ones of Southern Power
Thus I invite you to this tower
I do summon, stir and call you
See these rites and guard this circle!

Come to us and heed our call!
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
Come to us; and Blessed Be!

WEST
Western ones of water's flow
Help to guard us here below
I do summon, stir and call you
See these rites and guard this circle!

Come to us and heed our call!
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
Come to us; and Blessed Be!

NORTH
Earthen ones of Northern fame
Bless and guard our Power's fane
I do summon, stir and call you
See these rites and guard this circle!

Come to us and heed our call!
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
Come to us; and Blessed Be!

The HPS shall move to each corner, and say, following each corner's crying as she moves to the next:

HPS
So I cast and consecrate
This Circle of the small and great:
By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree,
By Rock and Earth, by Land and Sea,
By Fire and Water, Earth and Air,
By the Lord, and Lady Fair!
By Love and Joy and Work and Play,
All things harmful cast away!
By lightning's flash, and rain's soft fall,
By the Power that made us all;
By the Power that blesses Thee:
(Cast the Circle: Blessed be!)

On her return to the first corner she shall change the last line above, and say:

The Circle's cast; and Blessed Be!

The callers of the corners shall return their tools to the altar, and then shall join the circle at their corners.

Here begins the Beltane Mystery

BARD or GREEN MAN
Thus I invoke the Lady White
To come to us this sacred night.
By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree,
I show you a Mystery!

The Maiden shall stand beside the HP, who shall hold a wooden sword. The Bard/Green Man shall approach them, also carrying a wooden sword, and shall, in mime, challenge the HP. They shall strike their swords together in three sets of three blows, then Bard/Green Man shall strike the HP, with the last blow of his sword, who shall fall as if dead. (Note: This can be played as a Morris Dance, if so wished.) If no Maiden and Bard/Green Man are used, then the above combat may be eliminated, and the HP and HPS shall enact the Mystery. The HPS' part shall then be spoken by the participants.

The Maiden moves to the East. The Bard/Green Man moves to the North.

HPS
Cunning and art she did not lack
But aye his whistle would fetch her back!

MAIDEN
Oh, I shall go into a hare
with sorrow, sighing and mickle care
And I shall go in the Lady's Name
Aye, until I be fetched hame!

BARD/GREEN MAN
Hare, take heed of a swift greyhound
Will harry thee all these fields around
For here come I in the Lady's Name
All but for to fetch thee hame!

The Maiden moves to the South. The Bard/Green Man moves to the East.

HPS
Cunning and art she did not lack
But aye his whistle would fetch her back!

MAIDEN
Yet I shall go into a bee
With mickle fear and dread of thee
And flit to hive in the Lady's Name
Ere that I be fetch-ed hame!

BARD/GREEN MAN
Bee, take heed of a red, red cock
Will harry thee close thru door and lock
For here come I in the Lady's Name
All but for to fetch thee hame!

The Maiden moves to the West. The Bard/Green Man moves to the South.

HPS
Cunning and art she did not lack
But aye his whistle would fetch her back!

MAIDEN
Yet I shall go into a trout.
With sorrow and sighing and mickle doubt
And show thee many a merry game
Ere that I be fetch-ed hame!

BARD/GREEN MAN
Trout, take heed of an otter lank
Will harry thee close from bank to bank
For here come I in the Lady's Name
All but for to fetch thee hame!

The Maiden moves to the North. The Bard/Green Man moves to the West.

HPS
Cunning and art she did not lack
But aye his whistle would fetch her back!

MAIDEN
Yet I shall go into a mouse
And haste me unto the Miller's House
There in his corn to have good game
Ere that I be fetch-ed hame!

BARD/GREEN MAN
Mouse, take heed of a white tom-cat
That never was balked of mouse nor rat
For here come I in the Lady's Name
And -thus- it is I fetch thee hame!

Bard/Green Man walks to Maiden and takes her hand. They both move to the Cauldron, and face HPS.

HPS
Cunning and art she did not lack
But aye his Song has fetched her back!

Old Winter's dead, the Lady reigns
And Summer has returned again!

Bard/Green Man and Maiden both wet their hands with water from the Cauldron, and sprinkle it on the HP, who comes to life again.

HP
Cunning and art I do not lack
But aye Her Cauldron will bring me back!

Bard/Green Man and Maiden both move to, and jump, the fire. Here ends the Beltane Mystery. Note: This Mystery is the more historically correct "Great Rite."

If there is a May Pole, it should be erected by the men -only- at this point, and all dance around it, alternating male and female to raise the cone of power as outlined below. A normal cone-of-power may be raised, for growth and healing:

HPS
In a ring we all shall stand
Pass the Power, hand to hand.

HP
As the year is given birth
Build the Power; root to Earth

HPS
Pass the Power, hand to hand
Bless the Lady, bless the Land

HP
Bless the Lord, and bless the Skies
Bless the Power that never dies!

The above four verses should be repeated three times, (or as many as needed to fully wrap the pole) and then the HPS should say:

HPS
By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree:
Let the Power flow out and free!

All should release, at this point.

Such coven business as must be transacted may be done here.

The Circle is opened.

HPS
Thus I release the East and West
Thanks to them from Host to Guest
Thus I release the South and North
With "Blessed Be' I send them forth!
The Circle's open, dance we so
Out and homeward we shall go.
Earth and Water, Air and Fire
Celebrated our desire.
Winter's cold is gone away
Now it is the Day of May.
By Fin and Feather, Leaf and Tree,
Our circle's done; and Blessed Be!

COVEN
Blessed Be!

All spiral dance out from the Circle, jumping the fire as they go. HP and HPS lead, with Bard/Green Man and Maiden taking care of bringing the Bel Fire into camp. Allow the Bel fire to burn out on its own, if possible, otherwise put it out with the water from the Caldron. Disposal of the water otherwise should be to pour it at the roots of a tree. All participants may take fire from the Bel Fire to take home with them, cook over, or whatever, before it is extinguished.

end of Beltaine ritual: the Bard

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